finalized its recommendations on ERC report. Formulation of new pricing policy for urea units based on GoM's recommendations for replacing the existing Retention Price Scheme is under consideration of the Government. The proposed policy will be in the shape of Group Concession Scheme and is proposed to be introduced w.e.f. 1.4.2003. The new policy will aim at greater transparency, uniformity and efficiency in subsidy disbursements to urea units and will induce urea manufacturers to take cost reduction measures on their own and be competitive.

Closure of Barauni and Durgapur Fertilizer units

3155. MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to close down fertilizer units at Durgapur and Barauni; if so, the reasons for their closure;

(b) how the staff of both these units would be adjusted, after the closure; and

(c) how much would VRS cost to the exchequer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir, the Government have decided to close down Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Ltd. including Durgapur and Barauni units as the same have not been found techno-economically viable.

(b) and (c) The employees of the Durgapur and Barauni units have been offered benefits under the Voluntary Separation Scheme, costing about Rs. 135 crore.

Production of Bio-Fertilizers

†3156. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that now-a-days emphasis is on bio-fertilizers all over the world;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.